

CLAIMS:

1. A method of remotely controlling a firewall from a firewall controller in order to permit the flow of packet data through said firewall, the method comprising:

5 sending a request message from a firewall controller to a firewall requesting that a pinhole be opened;

opening a pinhole in said firewall;

sending a request message from a firewall controller to said firewall requesting that a pinhole be closed; and

10 closing said pinhole.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

determining the need for a pinhole in said firewall.

15 3. The method of claim 2 wherein said step of determining occurs at said firewall controller.

20 4. The method of claim 3 wherein said firewall controller is a media gateway controller.

5. The method of claim 1 further including the step of determining the need for a pinhole prior to sending a request that a pinhole be opened.

25 6. The method of claim 1 wherein said request messages are formatted in the H.248 protocol.

30 7. The method of claim 1 wherein said request messages are formatted in the common open policy services (COPS) protocol.

8. A firewall controller for permitting the flow of packet data, said firewall controller comprising:

means for determining a need for a pinhole in a
5 firewall;

means for sending a request message to said firewall requesting that a pinhole be opened in said firewall; and

means for sending a request message to said firewall requesting that said pinhole be closed in said firewall.

10 9. The firewall controller of claim 8 wherein said request messages are formatted in the H.248 protocol.

10. The firewall controller of claim 8 wherein said request messages are formatted in the common open policy services (COPS) protocol.

11. The firewall controller of claim 8 wherein said firewall controller is a media gateway controller.

12. A firewall responsive to a firewall controller for permitting the flow of packet data, said firewall comprising:

means for receiving a request message from said
25 firewall controller requesting that a pinhole be opened in said firewall;

means for opening a pinhole in said firewall;

means for receiving a request message from said firewall controller requesting that said pinhole be closed
30 in said firewall; and

means for closing said pinhole in said firewall.

13. The firewall of claim 12 wherein said request messages are formatted in the H.248 protocol.

5

14. The firewall of claim 12 wherein said request messages are formatted in the common open policy services (COPS) protocol.

10 15. A firewall responsive to a media gateway controller for permitting the flow of packet data, said firewall comprising:

means for receiving a request message from said media gateway controller requesting that a pinhole be opened in said firewall;

means for opening a pinhole in said firewall;

means for receiving a request message from said media gateway controller requesting that said pinhole be closed in said firewall; and

means for closing said pinhole in said firewall.

16. A computer program product for remotely controlling a firewall from a firewall controller in order to permit the flow of packet data through said firewall, the computer program product having a medium with a computer program embodied thereon, the computer program product comprising:

computer program code in said firewall controller for sending a request message to said firewall requesting that a pinhole be opened; and

computer program code in said firewall for opening a pinhole;

computer program code in said firewall controller for sending a request message to said firewall requesting that
5 said pinhole be closed; and

computer program code for in said firewall for closing said pin hole.

17. The computer program product of claim 16 further
10 comprising:

computer program code in said firewall controller for determining the need for a pinhole in said firewall.

18. The computer program product of claim 16 wherein said request messages are formatted in the H.248 protocol.

19. The computer program product of claim 16 wherein said request messages are formatted in the common open policy services (COPS) protocol.

20. The computer program product of claim 17 wherein said firewall controller is a media gateway controller.

21. A computer program product in a firewall controller,
25 said firewall controller operative with a firewall, the computer program product having a medium with a computer program embodied thereon, the computer program product comprising:

computer program code for determining the need for a
30 pinhole in said firewall;

computer program code for sending a request message to said firewall requesting that a pinhole be opened in said firewall; and

computer program code for sending a request message to
5 said firewall requesting that said pinhole be closed in said firewall.

22. The computer program product of claim 21 wherein said request messages are formatted in the H.248 protocol.

10

23. The computer program product of claim 21 wherein said request messages are formatted in the common open policy services (COPS) protocol.

24. The computer program product of claim 21 wherein said firewall controller is a media gateway controller.

25. A computer program product in a firewall, said firewall responsive to a firewall controller, the computer program product having a medium with a computer program embodied thereon, the computer program product comprising:

computer program code for receiving a request message from said firewall controller requesting that a pinhole be opened in said firewall;

25 computer program code for opening a pinhole in said firewall;

computer program code for receiving a request message from said firewall controller requesting that said pinhole be closed in said firewall; and

computer program code for closing said pinhole in said firewall.

26. A computer program product in a firewall, said
5 firewall responsive to a media gateway controller, the
computer program product having a medium with a computer
program embodied thereon, the computer program product
comprising:

10 computer program code for receiving a request message
from said media gateway controller requesting that a
pinhole be opened in said firewall;

computer program code for opening a pinhole in said
firewall;

5 computer program code for receiving a request message
from said media gateway controller requesting that said
pinhole be closed in said firewall; and

computer program code for closing said pinhole in said
firewall.

20 27. A computer system for remotely controlling a firewall
from a firewall controller comprising:

a firewall operatively connected to a private computer
network and at least one external computer network;

25 a firewall controller operatively connected to said
firewall for remotely instructing said firewall to open and
close pinholes in said firewall.

30 28. The computer system of claim 27 wherein said firewall
controller is a media gateway controller acting as a call
server in a VoIP telephony network.

29. The computer system of claim 28 wherein said media gateway controller instructs said firewall to open and close pinholes in said firewall such that media gateway endpoints within said private network can communicate with media gateway endpoints outside said private network on a per call basis.

008280" 02T05960